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| Important Facts to Know…   1. After the age of 6 months, the link to reducing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome no longer exists. 2. Using a dummy may increase the risk of stomach and mouth infections for your baby. 3. Using a dummy frequently for a prolonged time can cause your child to form a habit or an emotional dependence on the dummy. This can make weaning them off their dummy very distressing and difficult. 4. By 1 year of age dummy use can start to affect your baby’s communication and language development by:  * decreasing the amount of time your baby babbles and copies or plays with speech sounds * increasing risk of middle ear infections which may decrease your babies ability to hear speech sounds properly * increasing the risk of teeth displacement (e.g. overbite) * encouraging overdevelopment of frontal mouth muscles, possibly affecting how your baby uses their tongue | |  | | --- | | References and Useful Websites: www.lullabytrust.org.uk/dummies  [www.lullabytrust.org.uk/file/Fact-Sheet-Dummies.pdf](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/file/Fact-Sheet-Dummies.pdf)  [www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/getting-baby-to-sleep](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/getting-baby-to-sleep)  www.talkingpoint.org.uk/parents/speech-and-language/do-dummies-affect-speech  www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/when-should-we-ditch-the-dummy  www.nhs.uk/Livewell/dentalhealth/Pages/Goodhabitskids  [www.literacytrust.org.uk/talk\_to\_your\_baby/key\_topics/1601\_dummies](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/talk_to_your_baby/key_topics/1601_dummies)  http://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/news/can-dummy-affect-childs-speech-development/  www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-information-0/procedures-and-treatments/speech-and-language-development-birth-12-months |   **Your Health Visitor can give you advice and information on dummy use.**  **This leaflet was compiled by Jenna Harrison, trainee Early Years Teacher (2017).** | |  | | --- | | No doubt your <strong>baby</strong> doesn’t like the hard pacifier , but if you want ... | |  | | DUMMIES | | Useful Information for Parents | |
|  | Speech & Language Development in your baby’s first year… |  |
| You may be trying to decide whether to give your baby a dummy, wondering when it’s appropriate for your baby to use their dummy, or thinking about the best time to wean a baby off their dummy. All of these decisions are your choice as a parent or carer, but here is some useful information that may help you.  **The advantages of using a dummy…**  As one of your babies most basic needs, sucking is a natural comfort. Dummies can be a useful aid to soothing your child in preparation for sleep and when they are upset.  Babies are born with a sucking reflex which helps them know how to feed but using a dummy may help some babies develop a strong sucking pattern, especially babies born prematurely.  “Using a dummy when putting your baby down to sleep might reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome”. (The Lullaby Trust, 2016)  **REMEMBER: Always seek advice from your midwife or Health Visitor on when to introduce a dummy, as this may interfere with establishing breast feeding.** | From birth, babies express themselves by crying, “this is how your baby learns to control the air that comes from their lungs & use their vocal cords. It lays the foundation for speaking” GOSH, 2016. As your baby develops they will start to coo (make oh & ah sounds), copy your facial expressions, & may stick their tongue out. “The cooing stage is important as this is the time when your baby starts to develop control of the muscles needed for talking” GOSH, 2016  “A child using a dummy, regularly, beyond the age of 12 months could be more likely to struggle to develop speech sounds made the front of the mouth including p, b, t , d, s and may then need speech therapy” R. Harrison, Speech & Language Therapist  Your baby will start to experiment with ‘bubbly’ & ‘raspberry’ sounds with their lips, & practice intonation (up & down tuneful sounds). They will then start to ‘babble’, putting longer strings of sounds together, sounding more like real speech. They will ‘talk’ to you, other children, toys, animals, & themselves to practice speech. | Mothers don’t speak clearly to their <strong>babies</strong> | Lunatic Laboratories  Talking together with eye contact, smiles and facial expressions, not only helps your baby learn to speak but helps them understand how to communicate without words. This is the beginning of ‘empathy’.  Speech & language, like any other skill, requires lots of practice. Overuse of a dummy may reduce this practice.  For advice on supporting your baby’s speech & language development you could read the article ‘Speech and language development from birth 12 months’ at www.gosh.nhs.uk.  For advice on using a dummy, how to wean a child off a dummy, or how to care for a dummy, these popular websites for parents might be helpful:  [www.emmasdiary.co.uk/baby/baby-health/dummies](http://www.emmasdiary.co.uk/baby/baby-health/dummies)  www.babycentre.co.uk/dummies-and-your-toddler |